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291 regard to shaving the head and the same kind of caps as Barbaro had observed in the fifteenth. Of the gentry Chardin says that " ils sont si gueux et si misérables, que pour ne point gâter à la pluie leur calotte ou leur bonnet ils le mettent dans la poche lorsqu'il pleut et vont ainsi tête nue." He adds that
● [293] every man carried a length of rope " pour attacher les personnes et le bétail qu'ils enlèvent à leurs voisins "; a knife and a stone with which to sharpen it, a gun and three leather pouches, containing respectively salt, pepper, and needles and thread.

He adds that the poor peasantry go nearly naked, with simply a piece of felt to cover them. " Ils mettent le feutre," he says, " en passant la tête dedans, et ils le tournent comme ils veulent du côté que vient le vent ou la pluie ; car il ne couvre qu'un côté du corps, et ne descend que jusqu'aux genoux."

191 Most of the mediæval travellers agree in describing the
[274] Georgian gentry as ignorant and idle, dissolute and venal, gluttonous and drunken. The history of these days is one long enumeration of murders, assassinations, mutilations, robberies, abductions and treacheries, and it is easy to believe the worst which the travellers have to say of their Georgian hosts. Nevertheless, condemnation of the manners of mediæval and eighteenth-century Georgia should be tempered by the consideration that the vices and crimes recorded are comparative. The condition of the serfs of Georgia was no worse than that of the serfs of Russia or of Continental Europe ; the lives of the princes no more extravagant and no more immoral than those of the courtiers of Louis XIV or of Charles II. Further, local conditions both of climate and of politics tended to vitiate the characters of the Georgian gentry. A lowland climate and a land of plenty, and a diet composed chiefly of millet and pork, made them lazy and luxury-loving ; an abundance of wine made them drunkards ; their privileges made them extravagant. Again, difficult political conditions, which required the conciliation of a powerful neighbour, or the betrayal of a weak or unwary ally, produced a type of man who was opportunist, unscrupulous, venal and without ideals. Lastly, frequent contact with the degenerate civilisations of Islam and with the minor ruffians of Persian and Turkish history accelerated a general decline of morals and a lapse into a sensual and undignified mode of life.

Chardin gives the following analysis of the character of the Georgians, with which the observations of previous and contemporary travellers are in general agreement : " Les Géorgiens